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RULES THAT GOVERN FASTING



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THE KORAN AND FASTING

God Almighty says in the Surah (The Cow)[1]: **"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil); (Fast) a certain number of days; and (for) him who is sick among you, or on a journey, (the same) number of other days; and for those who can afford it there is a ransom: the feeding of a man in need–But whoso doeth good of his own accord it is better for him: and that ye fast is better for you if ye did but know– The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you; and (He desireth) that ye should complete the period, and that ye should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradven-**

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1) Verses 183 to 187.

ture ye may be thankful. And when My servants question thee concerning Me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he crieth unto Me. So let them hear My call and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright. It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fast. They are raiment for you and ye are raiment for them. Allah is Aware that ye were deceiving yourselves in this respect and He hath turned in mercy toward you and relieved you. So hold intercourse with them and seek that which Allah hath ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becometh distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall and touch them not, but be at your devotions in the mosques. These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them not. Thus Allah, expoundeth His revelations to mankind that they may ward off (evil)."

FOREWORD

Praise be to God, the Creator of all creatures, the Sender of the messengers to humanity, to guide and enlighten man, and peace and mercy be upon His messenger Muhammed Ibn Abdullah the seal of the prophets. God, grand be His name, sent him as a messenger and harbinger to all people, and made of his tolerant religion the seal of the messages, and of his family and companions outstanding Imams (prayer leaders).

Furthermore, this is a booklet that deals with fasting, and what is related to it, such as: performance of prayers, seclusion of one's self in the mosque, and the giving of alms at the end of Ramadan in a simple easy style, taking into consideration the clear legal approved-of conventions which do not need any explanation. I suppose that this booklet is of need to the intellectuals who did not benefit from the moral judgments of their religion, especially those who wrote detailed books, complicated researches, and had publications that confused them and left them with no relying or convincing answer. In this

booklet, I avoided mentioning the differences of opinion and the different views regarding the issues that lack a clear cut text* asserting the adopted point of view. I do not want to extend in my explanation, the booklet is in the hands of the ordinary and well educated readers. They will find in it – by God's will – what I have pointed at and I hope that it will be of benefit, and that Allah, grand be His name, will mold it to serve His sake, and that it will be of benefit to the fasting Muslims, as to be acquainted with the principles of one of the five pillars of Islam.

Kamal Ali Al-Muntasser
Islamic Call Society

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* Imam Malek said: I am but a human being: sometimes I am right, and sometimes I am mistaken, so follow my point of view: abide by what is in accordance with the Book and the Sunnah (Biography of the Prophet 'peace be upon him'), and leave the rest.

INTRODUCTION

When humanity reached the stage of maturity, after the sequence of revelations of heavenly messages prior to Islam, and after it attained a well developed stage, and was ready, prepared, and capable of holding an eternal and universal heavenly message, that comprises the human earthly needs, God Almighty, glory to Him sent His messenger Muhammed Ibn Abdullah (peace be upon him) with the message of Islam. God Almighty says in the Surah (The Table Spread): **"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion Al-Islam".**[1]

God Almighty chose the religion of Islam for humanity, because:

1) It is the religion of nature, read His saying, grand be His name, in the Surah (The Romans):

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1) Verse: 3.

"So set thy purpose (O Muhammed) for religion as a man by nature upright–the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation. That is the right religion, but most men know not–"[1]

2) It is the religion of human unity and equality, God glorified be His name, says in the Surah (The Private Appartments): **"O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware"**[2]

3) Since man by nature venerates freedom fights and struggles for its attainment, the religion of Islam calls and incites to it, honoring man in this existence. In particular, Islam appreciates the freedom of belief, read His saying, grand be His name, in the Surah (The Cow): **"There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error"**[3].

4) Islam considers man as made up of body and soul, thus Islam does not give preference or superiority to one over the other, or ignore anyone

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1) Verse: 30.
2) Verse: 13.
3) Verse: 256.

of them. Henceforth, if God, on the one hand, prescribed some duties on man to refine his manners, He, on the other hand, permitted him to enjoy all the blessings of the earthly life. God Almighty says in the Surah (The Heights): "**Say: Who hath forbidden the adornment of Allah which He hath brought forth for His bondmen, and the good things of His providing? Say: Such, on the Day of Resurrection, will be only for those who believed during the life of the world**"[1].

5) The teachings, judgments, doctrines, and morals of Islam do no contradict with the nature of the straight man, they rather go hand in hand with it, help shaping it, and lead it towards good conduct, maturity, and perfection. Consider attentively His saying, grand be His name, in the Surah (The Table Spread): "**Now hath come unto you light from Allah and a plain Scripture, whereby Allah guideth him who seeketh His good pleasure unto paths of peace. He bringeth them out of darkness unto light by His decree, and guideth them unto a straight path**"[2].

The sending of the messengers and the messages to humanity went on, to call for the Oneness of

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1) Verse: 32.

2) The two verses: 15 and 16.

Allah the Creator, and to solve the problems of life. Islam was the seal of these messages, for its wide coverage of solutions to the problems, whether of essential or partial importance. It contained all that can organize the life of the individual and the community, irrespective of time, place and race, granting them an honorable good life on earth, and happiness in the Hereafter.

For that reason, Islam came with the following teachings:

First – **The Beliefs:** Man is to believe in the One and Unique God who has no partners, and to believe in His messengers, scriptures, angels, and the Judgment Day, believing in all of this in one's heart and acknowledging it with his tongue, without differentiating between one messenger and another. God, grand be His name, says in the Surah (The Cow): **"The messenger believeth in that which hath been revealed unto him from his Lord and (so do) the believers. Each one believeth in Allah and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers–We make no distinction between any of His messengers..."**[1].

Second –**The Morals:** These are the virtues that Islam called upon of good manners, high princi-

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1) Verse: 285.

ples, and noble characters such as honesty, truthfulness, courage, and good treatment.

Third – **The worships:** These are the sayings and doings performed by the Muslim as a way to approach God Almighty, and to obey His commands.

Worship is the principal mission of man on earth. Consider the saying of God, grand be His name in the Surah (The Winnowing Winds): **"I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me. I seek no livelihood from them, nor do I ask that they should feed Me. Lo! Allah! He it is that giveth livelihood, the Lord of unbreakable might"**[1].

Religious observances, worship, and piety have the same meaning, and are only devouted to Allah, the Creator of the universe, of life, and of the human being.

Worship in Islam is of a wide scope. As it includes prayer, alms-giving, fasting, pilgrimage, fighting for the elevation of the Word of God and protecting the homeland, and prescribing the good and forbidding the unlawful, it also includes the worldly matters if man's intentions are good,

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1) Verses: 56-57-58.

whereby he seeks in his good work to approach God Almighty, and not praise and good reputation.

Basic things that should be noticed concerning worship in Islam, these are:

1) There is no room at all for any intercessor who claims to be a mediator between man and God, because God Almighty is more Sublime, Greater, and Higher than having mediators or intercessors. For His saying, grand be His name in the Surah (The Heights): **"His verily is all creation and commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!"**[1] and His saying in the Surah (The Cow): **"And when My servants question thee concerning Me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he crieth unto Me. So let them hear My call and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright"**[2]. And the true Muslim is the one who does not feel at any moment of his life that he is in need of a mediator – whoever is this mediator – between him, and his Maker, grand be His name.

2) Not to exaggerate or overdo things, so that

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1) Verse: 54.
2) Verse: 186.

man would not retreat to worship only and thus ignores or fails in performing his other duties in public life. Islam does not demand from man to abandon the world completely or to devote himself to worship, because Islam is a religion of balance and moderation in everything; for His saying, grand be His name in the Surah (The Story): **"But seek the abode of the Hereafter in that which Allah hath given thee and neglect not thy portion of the world, and be thou kind even as Allah hath been kind to thee, and seek not corruption in the earth; lo! Allah loveth not corrupters"**[1].

3) Easiness and abandonment of hardship, because Islam refuses hardship or putting worship in chains. God, grand be His name says in the Surah (The Pilgrimage): **"He hath chosen you and hath not laid upon you in religion any hardship"**[2].

And in a Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him): **[This religion is one of easiness, and anybody who is to confront it will succeed on it (that is in applying it]**[3].

Furthermore, fasting – the subject of this

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1) Verse: 77.
2) Verse: 78.
3) Related by Imam Al-Bukhari.

booklet – is an old and well known act of devotion. It is well esteemed and ranked by the fact that it is the only worship that God Almighty described very clearly in His Glorious Book, a description that we do not find for the other pillars of Islam, whose details, explanations and the ways of performing them reached us only through the said and applied Sunnah.

THE MEANING OF FASTING

In Arabic, fasting means the refrainment from doing something; thus if a person abstains from speaking or eating; and he do not talk or eat; he is said to be fasting.

And accordingly, the saying of God Almighty in the Surah (Mary), a story about her, may peace be upon her: **"Lo! I have vowed a fast unto the Beneficent, and may not speak this day to any mortal"**[1], i.e. a fast from speaking.

Moreover, and accordingly is the saying of the Arabs the wind "fasted", if it stopped blowing, and the horse "fasted", if it ceased running.

In Islamic jurisprudence, fasting means: the abstinence from fast breakers from dawn till the time of sunset, with the intention to fast during the night prior to the day of fasting.

It is also required from the fasting Muslim to abstain from foolish talking during the period of

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1) Verse: 26.

fasting more than at any other time. To honor this blessed month during which God had ordained fasting, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **(If it is a day during which one of you is fasting, he should neither commit obscenities, nor should be below. If someone insults him or fights him; let him say: I am a fasting person)**[1].

1) Narrated by Muslim.

FASTING BEFORE ISLAM

One aspect of fasting is that it is a physical act of devotion, and a spiritual exercise that had existed since ancient times. The old Egyptians used to fast, as well as the Chinese and the Greeks. When Islam came, fasting was already known to the people of the scriptures, some of whom are the Jews and the Christians, for Almighty God's saying, praised be His name, in the Surah (The Cow): **"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil);"**[1].

However, fasting, according to those and to other nations has a different meaning and takes different forms, some of which are: abstinence from some kinds of food, or abstinence from all food. Fasting at certain times during the same day or fasting for consecutive days. Fasting as a penance for sins and guilts, or fasting for gratitude, and for many other reasons.

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1) Verse: 183.

Before Islam, the day of Ashura[1] was a glorified day to the followers of Moses. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) emigrated from Mekka to Meddina, and as he arrived at Medina he found the Jews fasting, he asked: What is this? they said: This is a good day, whereby God saved the sons of Israel from their enemies. Moses, may God bless him, used to fast on that day. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: I am worthier of Moses than you are, and he fasted that day, and made the fasting of this day an obligation on all Muslims.[2]

The obligation to fast on the day of the Ashura was dropped after it was prescribed to fast the month of Ramadan every year. Still fasting on that day is still likeable[3], following the lead of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

It is also desirable to fast on the ninth day, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned it.

According to Ibn Omar, may God bless him, it was said: **[The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) fasted on the day of the Ashura, and made it an obligation on Muslims. They replied: O! Mes-**

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1) 10th of Muharram.
2) Narrated by Al-Bukhari, and Muslim.
3) Who fast it will acquire reward and credit.

senger of God, it is a day glorified by the Jews and the Christians, he said: Next year, we shall fast on the ninth day, if God wills].

The following year, the messenger of God (peace be upon him) died.

KINDS OF FASTING

The following are the kinds of fasting:

1) **Fasting as a religious duty:** this is fasting during the month of Ramadan as God ordained in His Glorious Book: "**And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month**"[1].

2) **Fasting as a settlement:** this is the fasting that should be performed by the Muslim if he did not fast on a day during the month of Ramadan, for one reason or another.

3) **Fasting as a vow:** this is the fasting that the Muslim imposes on himself to gain the favour of God, glory to His name. It should be done according to the vow, if a man made a vow to fast one day or many days without specifying the date, he should fast any day or days. God, glory to His name says in the Surah (The Bee): "**Fulfil the covenant of Allah when ye have**

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1) Verse: 185.

covenanted"[1]. He also says in the Surah (The Pilgrimage): "**Then let them make an end of their unkemptness and pay their vows and go around the ancient House**"[2].

4) **Fasting for expiation:** the reason for this kind of fasting is one of the following:

   a) Breaking one's fasting on purpose by eating or drinking during the day in the month of Ramadan for no legal reason; Read His saying, grand be His name in the Surah (The Cow): "**and eat and drink until the white thread becometh distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall...**"[3].

   b) Sexual intercourse or intentional masturbation during the day in the glorious month of Ramadan. Almighty says in the Surah (The Cow): "**It is made lawful for you to go unto your wives on the night of the fast**"[4]. In this verse it is understood that intercourse during the day is prohibited.

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1) Verse: 91.
2) Verse: 29.
3) Verse: 187.
4) Verse: 187.

c) Accidental homicide or such actions, according to Almighty's saying in the Surah (Women): "**and (also) a believing slave must be set free. And whoso hath not the wherewithal must fast two consecutive months. A penance from Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise**"[1].

d) Perpetrating some impermissible actions during the state of ritual consecration in pilgrimage, and the inability to follow the right way. Read His saying, grand be His name in the Surah (The Cow): "**And whoever among you is sick or hath an ailment of the head must pay a ransom of fasting or almsgiving or offering**"[2].

e) Breaking a promise, and the expiation for breaking a promise is done of the four things mentioned below. They are organized in the same order as mentioned in the Glorious Koran:

   1. Feeding ten needy people: lunch or dinner, or the equal of the amount of food.

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1) Verse: 92.
2) Verse: 196.

2. Clothing ten poor people with clothes worth of prayer.

3. Freeing a slave.

4. Being unable to perform the above, man should fast three consecutive or scattered days. God, glory to His name, says in the Surah (The Table Spread): "**The expiation thereof is the feeding of ten of the needy with the average of that wherewith ye feed your own folk, or the clothing of them, or the liberation of a slave, and for him who findeth not (the wherewithal to do so) then a three days' fast. This is the expiation of your oaths when ye have sworn**"[1].

f) Pre-Islamic form of divorce (Al-Zihar): that is when a man says to his wife the following words of repudiation: you are to me like my mother's back, or sister's back, or any other woman forbidden to him; to perpetuate against the daughter or the paternal aunt which is unlawful. In this case, man is not allowed to approach her unless he expiates. Here, there are three

1) Verse: 89.

forms of expiation listed below as mentioned in the Glorious Koran: God, glory to His name, says in the Surah (She That Disputeth): "**Those who put away their wives (by saying they are as their mothers) and afterward would go back on that which they have said, (the penalty) in that case (is) the freeing of a slave before they touch one another. Unto this ye are exhorted; and Allah is Informed of what ye do – And he who findeth not (the wherewithal), let him fast for two successive months before they touch one another; and for him who is unable to do so (the penance is) the feeding of sixty needy ones...**"[1].

5) **Voluntary fasting**, which will be discussed later on.

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1) Verses: 2 and 3.

RULES THAT GOVERN FASTING

Fasting during the month of Ramadan every year is a religious duty performed by every obligated Muslim, legally capable: male or female. Fasting is one of the five fundamental principles of Islamic belief. It is one of the matters that were known by religion to be an obligation.

Evidence asserting the obligatory fast throughout the month of Ramadan is:

1) In the Glorious Koran: Almighty's saying in the Surah (The Cow): "**O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil); (Fast) a certain number of days**"[1]. And His saying, grand be His name in the same Surah: "**The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong). And**

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1) Verse 183 and the beginning of the following verse.

whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month''[1].

2) And in the prophetic Sunnah, according to Abdullah Ibn Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, may God bless them, he said: **[I heard the messenger of God (peace be upon him) saying: 'Islam was based on five principles: Testimony of the Oneness of God, I witness no God but Allah, and Muhammed is the messenger of God; performing the prayers, almsgiving, pilgrimage, and fasting during Ramadan'.]**

In addition to the above, all Muslims unanimously agreed on the performance of an obligatory fasting throughout the month of Ramadan, and nobody opposed it since the dawn of Islam until today. Accordingly, anyone who denies this obligation will be considered an apostate.

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1) Verse: 185.

WHEN IS FASTING PRESCRIBED?

Fasting during the month of Ramadan is prescribed to every legally obligated Muslim on the day of Monday[1] after two nights had passed of the month of Shaaban in the second year of the Hegira.

The month of Ramadan itself is devoted for fasting, because in it, there are good blessings for all the people in general. The best thing in this month is that the Glorious Quran was revealed to lead the world on the right way and to fill it with light and knowledge.

God Almighty,, grand be His name, says in the Surah (The Cow): **"The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong)"**[2]. Every year, at the beginning of this blessed month, Muslims resort to the Glorious Koran, to fill their hearts

1) The books of the Sunnah.
2) Verse: 185.

with security, belief, happiness, love, and faithfulness, and to enlighten their minds against false doctrines, spurious paganism, and immoral behaviour. Also, to recall the rebellion of Islam against the heretic tendencies, and the tyrannical acts of man against his fellowmen.

WHEN MUST ONE FAST?

Fasting the month of Ramadan is obligated upon being sure that it had started, and this is done through one of the following:

1) When two juristic witnesses see the crescent (new moon) on the thirtieth night of the month of Shaaban, and that is if the sky was cloudless, and the vision was clear.

   According to Hussein Ibn Al-Hareth, may God bless him, he said: The prince of Mekka – Abdullah Ibn Omar, may God bless them – delivered a speech, then said: **[The messenger of God (peace be upon him) charged us to seclude ourselves for observance, if we did not see it[1], and two juristic witnesses witnessed having seing it, then we should adopt their testimony]**[2].

2) When a large group sees the new moon, and it is known that they would not agree to deceive

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1) i.e. the crescent.

2) Narrated by the people of the Sunnah.

people; furthermore, they are numerous, and among them it is not necessary to have any juristic witness or a man of honorable record.

3) When one person with an honorable record and is trust worthy sees the crescent. Based upon the speech of Ibn Umar, may God bless them, he said: **[People saw the crescent and I told the messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) that I saw it; so he fasted and commanded the people to fast too]**[1].

Anyone who sees the crescent should report his vision to the media which he believes would inform all the other Muslims. Furthermore, even if his report was not accepted by the responsible authorities, he is required to fast.

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1) Narrated by the people of the Sunnah.

THE DAY OF DOUBT

The day of doubt is the day that follows the thirtieth night of the month of Shaaban, when the sky is cloudy, and the clear vision of the crescent cannot be assured.

Salt Ibn Zufr Al-Kufi one of the most important erudites of the followers, related to us: We were at Ammar Ibn Yasser house, when he brought a roast lamb and said: eat; some of the people retired and said: we are fasting. Hence Ammar said: who fasts on the day of doubt disobeys Abi Al-Kassem (peace be upon him).

Fasting on the day of doubt is forbidden, but if it was later confirmed that it is the first day of Ramadan, Muslims are obliged to fast directly in reverence of this sacred month, even though the intention of fasting was not done during the preceding night. Anyway, it should be fasted, even if the Muslim fasts for precaution.

TIMES ASSIGNED FOR FASTING

The period of time assigned for fasting is from the time of dawn till the hour of sunset everyday, according to Almighty's saying in the Surah (The Cow): "... **and eat and drink until the white thread becometh distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then strictly observe the fast till nightfall**"[1].

By the white thread, it is meant the beginning of dawn, and by the black thread the darkness of night.

According to Ibn Omar, may God bless them, he said: **[The Prophet (peace be upon him) had Bilal and the blind Ibn Um Maktum as announcers of the hours of prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: When Bilal announces the hour of the night prayers eat and drink till Ibn Um Maktum announces the hour of prayer. Ibn Umar stated: The pause between the two was the time needed for**

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1) Verse: 187

Bilal to descend the rostrum and for Ibn Um Maktum to ascend it.[1] And according to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: **When the night comes, and the day elapses, and the sun sets, the fasting person should have his fast broken]**[2].

In countries where the days or the nights are very long, so that there is only left a small part of the day or the night, people estimate the day or the night according to the time of the nearest Islamic country, where the time periods of day and night are standard, so as to be able to perform their prayers and fasting in the right way without hardship, according to His saying, grand be His name: **"...Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you; and (He desireth) that ye should complete the period, and that ye should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure ye may be thankful"**[3]

It is probable that the obvious wisdom behind limiting fasting for the day time is to test the human soul, and to train it to fight, to be patient in front of the desires, the drives, and the bad

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1) Related by Al-Bukhari.
2) Related by Al-Bukhari.
3) Verse: 185.

manners. It is also to test its patience and endurance in relinquishing what it is accustomed and habituated to. No doubt all of this cannot be fulfilled by fasting during the night, because it is a time of rest, and sleep where the true intentions cannot be manifested or recognized.

To abstain from food and drink during the day in the month of Ramadan is a revolution against what the people have been accustomed to do in their everyday life, so that they may have the chance to see, think and contemplate, and hence prepare their souls for human perfection, to be able to lead a strong, straight and clean life.

Therefore, fasting is faith in the heavenly part of man, when the earthly bestial part turns him into an exhausted and languid person.

Moreover, the human soul is in need of a moral exercise, at least for one month, after eleven months spent in fulfilling the demands of its material life.

Fasting is the best moral exercise, because it refines the frivolous souls, and increases the good intentions, and the noble and generous human feelings.

This, and the other sayings, are the secret of His saying, glory to His name, in the Surah (The

Cow): **“and that ye fast is better for you if ye did but know”**[1].

1) Verse: 184.

DIFFERENT TIMES OF THE RISING OF THE CRESCENT (NEW MOON)

Many erudites, ancient and modern agree that it is not necessary to rely completely on the different times for the rising of the crescent. They adopt this view because they aim at unifying the Islamic acts of devotion and the dates of the feasts. Also, they are convinced that unifying the starting hour of fasting is one of the strongest elements which tie Muslims to one another in all the countries, and gather them around one word, and one path, especially the Arab Muslims who are in need to be reconciled, and unified against their enemies who are awaiting them from everyside.

Based on this, if the crescent of Ramadan is proved to be seen in any of the countries, all Muslims should fast as soon as the news is transmitted to them through a trustful medium.For this matter, quoted is in the noble Hadith: **[Fast upon seeing the rise of the crescent of Ramadan, and break the fast upon seeing the rise of the crescent of the month of Shawwal]**[1] it is a general

1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari.

commandment to all Muslims wherever they are.

While the evidence mentioned in Almighty's saying in the Surah (The Cow): **"...And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month..."**[1]. This verse emphasizes the presence, and not the vision.

The meaning is: those of you who are present during Ramadan and knew of it, have to fast, if they were of those who are obligated so fast.

While for the countries which do not share the night during which the crescent was seen, with the country where the vision took place; they would be in a day that is considered the last day of the month of Shaaban, and consequently they have to fast on the following day.

However, some astronomers are accustomed to prepare calendars of fasting for the month of Ramadan before the visual assertion of the month, relying on some astronomical rules. These rules are not to be accepted, because the seeing of the crescent may not coincide with the date assigned in their calendar, and thus the month of Ramadan is advanced a day.

It is to be noticed that Muslims usually do not

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1) Verse: 185.

rely totally on the calendars for the determination of the first day of Ramaḍan, but we rather find them getting prepared every year to see the crescent, and if they did they fast, or else they continue counting the thirty days of the month of Shaaban.

It is a Sunna for the Muslim upon the seeing of the crescent or knowing that it was seen to say: O God! Make it come unto us with peace, belief, safety, and surrender to Islam. Allah is my God, and yours, a Crescent of guidance and blessings.[1]

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1) Related by the people of the Sunnah.

UPON WHOM FASTING IS OBLIGATED?

Fasting during the month of Ramadan is obligated on every Muslim who is: mature, capable, not travelling or sick to the extent that his sickness forbids him from fasting, nor a menstruating woman, nor a woman who is still in child bed. Herebelow are these cases detailed:

a) Fasting, then, is not required from immature children, even though the first Muslims paid a special attention to the young generation urging the youth to join the believers in fulfilling their Islamic duties, like fasting; they used to encourage them to fast for several days as an exercise and a preparation for them to get used to fasting from their childhood, so that they would not find it hard when they grow up.

   Moreover, children must pray in order to get used to prayers while young, so as not to find it difficult when they get mature.

   Abdullah Ibn Omar, may God bless them, related to us the following: the messenger of

God (peace be upon him) said: **[Order your children to fast while they are seven years old, and when ten years old, beat them if they do not fast, and have them sleep each in a seperate bed]**[1].

b) The unable is:

1) The sick person who, if he fasts, he would gravely harm himself either by aggravating his sickness, or by delaying his recovery. This person is excused from fasting, specially if he is in need of medication according to the doctor's advise. Nevertheless, he is required to settle the days he did not fast after he gets well later on. God, grand be His name, says in the Surah (The Cow): **"and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey; (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you"**[2].

The doctor may advise people not to fast in the following cases: [3]

a. The debilitating diseases: tuberculosis, diseases of the chest, heart depression,

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1) Related by Abu Dawoud
2) Verse: 185.
3) See the school of Fasting by Abdullah Muchtahra.

and accute intestinal infections accompanied by vomiting or diarrhea.

b. Ulcer, and the accute intestinal and gastric infection.

c. Feverish conditions, because they necessitate an increase in the amount of drinking water.

d. Psychological disturbances accompanied by a loss of weight.

However, the permission given to the sick person to break his fast, depends upon the advise of the doctor, the feeling of the sick person himself, and the attachment of both the patient and the doctor to the moral obligations of the legislation which orders to ease things and eliminate hardships.

On condition that both the sick person and the doctor should remember Almighty's saying in the Surah (The Cow): "... **and that ye fast is better for you if ye did but know**"[1].

However, if the diagnosis is uncertain,

1) Verse: 184.

and the case of the patient is not serious, nor is the harm from fasting certain, the duty of the Muslim is to try and fast, and see whether he is capable of fasting or not, so that the sanctity of the month of Ramadan would not be violated by breaking the fast.

2) The elderly and aged person: These are the very old persons who cannot fast at all, both men and women, and similarly persons who are suffering from a chronic disease of which they are not expected to recover. All those are excused from fasting, but they are to feed a poor person for each day they do not fast.

According to Ibn Abbas, may God bless them: in His saying, grand be His name, in the Surah (The Cow): **"and for those who can afford it there is a ransom: the feeding of a man in need"**. This is only allowed – i.e. feeding and breaking the fast – to those who cannot fast, or have an incurable illness.

3) Al-Mujahed while he is fighting. The Mujahed who is fighting for the cause of God, glorified be His name, and in defense of his homeland, is permitted to break his fast during the days of Ramadan in case he worries that he may get weak if he fasts during battles. He has to settle for the days he did not fast

later on when his mission is completed.

According to Jaber Ibn Abdullah, may God bless them: **[The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) went out to Mekka in the year of the conquest and fasted till he reached the extremity of Al-Ghamin[1], and the people fasted with him, so he was told: the people find it difficult to fast, and they are looking forward to see what you have done. So he asked for a cup of water after the afternoon prayer and drank, while the people were watching him. Some of them broke the fast, while others kept on fasting. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was told that some people did not break their fast, he said: Those are the sinners, because they did not accept the permission that God had given them]**[2].

4) The traveller or voyager is permitted to break his fast during the days of Ramadan according to Almighty God's saying in the Surah (The Cow): **"...and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you..."**[3].

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1) The name of a valley behind Assfan.

2) Narrated by Muslim and the Nissai'.

3) Verse: 185.

However, it is preferable for the traveller to fast if he is able to do so. Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz said concerning fasting and breaking the fast while travelling: "The best of them is the easiest one".

The journey in which fasting is excused is that journey in which the time intervals for performing the four prayers are shortened. He, who intends to fast while he is at home, and then decides to travel for one reason or another during the same day is allowed to break his fast as soon as he commences his journey. It is also permitted for the one who is getting ready to travel, and is preparing for it to break the fast.

According to Obeid Ibn Jubeir, he said: I went with Abi Bassra Al-Ghafri on board of a ship from the Fastat[1] during the month of Ramadan. He pushed the boat off-shore then brought his lunch, and said: come. So I said: Are you not between the houses? Abu Bassra answered: Have you left the Sunnah of the messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)[2].

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1) Proper noun of ancient Egypt that was build by Omru Ibn Al-Ass.

2) The question is negative, – The Hadith was related by Imam Ahmed, and Abu Dawwoud

When the voyager comes back from his journey, he is obligated to settle the days he had broken.

5) A pregnant woman is excused from fasting, if fasting harms her, or if she worries that the embryo may get hurt. The same thing applies to the woman who is breast - feeding, and who worries about her newly born child from harm. But both of the two women are obliged to settle for the unfasted days later on whenever they are able to do so.

Abu Kalaba may God bless him, relates about a man his saying:[1] **[I went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) for a certain need while he was having lunch, he said: Come and eat, so I told him that I was fasting. He said, come and let me tell you about fasting. God had allowed the traveller to perform half the prayers, and the fasting, and permitted the pregnant woman and the foster mother to break the fast]**[2].

6) The menstruating woman, and the woman who is still in childbed are also excused from

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1) It was said: the man was Inss Ibn Malek from Beni Abdullah Ibn Kaab.

2) Related by the people of the Sunnah.

fasting, and it (fasting) is not accepted of them while they are in the menstruation period and the child bed period, and they have to settle for what they have missed of the fasting days later on.

If the blood of menstruation or child bed ceased before dawn, they should fast the following day with the obligation to intend fasting during the night. In case they did not set the intention to fast at night, they are obliged to keep on fasting and settle for that day later on.

While for the over menstruating woman, that is the woman who discharges blood, at periods outside the menstruation or childbed periods, she should fast and pray[1], because the blood that was discharged is nothing but a putrid and spoilt blood.

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1) On the condition to perform the ablution for every prayer.

CONDITIONS OF FASTING

First – **Islam:** Among the prerequisites for the performance of the religious duties is that they should be performed by a Muslim, and who ever apostalizes – while he is fasting – his fasting would be refused, and he would have to settle for the days he did not fast, later on if God guided him to Islam.

Second – **Setting the intention:** Fasting without setting the intention for it during the night preceeding the day of fasting is considered improper. Setting the intention is made, during the period starting at sunset and ending just before dawn, for what was related about Hafsa, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and may God bless her, that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said: **[Those who do not set the intention to fast before dawn, will have no fasting the next day]**[1]. The meaning of this is that the fasting of a person who does not set his intention to fast before

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1) Related by the people ot the Sunnah.

dawn, is refused. The place of the intention is the heart: thus it (the intention) should not be uttered aloud. Instead of saying it aloud, the fasting person, should prepare himself for the last meal before dawn break (Suhur) and should investigate the time specified to stop eating, drinking, etc.

Setting the intention to fast is made once at the beginning of each consecutive period, such as the fasting of the month Ramadan, the expiation of Ramadan, the expiation for the sins of Al-Zihar, that is the person who tells his wife that she is to him like his mother's back, accidental homicide, and the fasting that the Muslim had vowed to perform consecutively.

In case the continuity of this fasting was cut for one reason or another, such as an illness, a journey or menstruation, a new setting for the intention to fast has to be made the night preceeding the day in which the continuation of fasting is desired while for those who had intended to fast, but changed their mind, and if this took place at night and continued till the break of dawn, then their fasting would not be accounted for, and they have to settle for that day later on.

WHAT CORRUPTS FASTING

Fasting is corrupted or not accounted for, due to the following:

1) Sexual intercourse at daytime.
2) Secretion of sperms or masturbation for any reason, when this is done on purpose. But in case the secretion was discharged while asleep due to a dream, then fasting is still accounted for.
3) If any kind of solid or liquid substance enters into the body of the fasting person, purposely, knowingly, and voluntarily, and if the entrance of that substance was by a natural way.
4) By smoking any kind of substance, whether through the mouth, such as cigarettes or through the nose, such as (snuff).
5) An injection which is injected into the hind part, while the injection which is given in the skin or in the veins does not break the fast. It is preferable for the fasting person to take the injections and other medicaments during the night, if it is possible.

According to Abu Huraira, may God bless him – the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **[That who break the fast one day in Ramadan without God permission, the fasting of his life time will not make God forgive him]**[1]. The meaning is:

That who breaks the fast in the month of Ramadan intentionally, without a legal reason, misses a great recompense, a reward that he cannot win again even though he might fast all his lifetime through. This is an allusion to the grandeur of recompense to God. Al-Zahabi[2] said: It is decided between the believers: that he who relinquishes the fasting of Ramadan without being sick, is worse than committing adultery, or being an addict of alcohol, and the other Muslims will suspect his Islam, and think of him as being heretic and corrupted.

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1) Related by Al-Bukhari
2) Jurisprudence of the Sunnah.

THE EXPIATION

Expiation was legislated for those who violate the sacredness of fasting the days of Ramadan through breaking their fast on purpose, and it is a sanction for the great sin they had committed.

Fasting for expiation is:

1) Fasting for two months on condition that fasting is continuous. The starting day is fixed by the crescent from the beginning of the lunar month. If one's fasting began in the middle of the month, he should fast the whole second month, if it is a thirty days month or a twenty nine days month – then he should complete the first month by fasting the missing days in the third month, counting until he reaches thirty days.

Those who break their fast on purpose for one day; then their whole fasting will not be taken into account and they have to start their fasting all over again; for this kind of fasting requires continuity. Also continuity is required in the fasting for the expiation of Al-Zihar, and in the fasting for the expiation of killing by mistake. This kind of

expiation is referred to as the big expiation. While the small expiation is ransomed by "feeding"; and this was explained in the section: 'Who is obligated to fast'.

2) Feeding sixty poor people; and the poor include the paupers and the needy who do not possess the means of subsistence for a whole year; but do not include persons that already live at the expense of others such as the parents, wives, and children. The expiator should give each of the sixty poor people one Mudd[1] of the aliments of all the natives of that country, and they may be given the cash value of this portion instead, or the expiation may feed the above mentioned number of persons; two meals from his food, whether a lunch, a dinner, a breakfast, or a meal before daybreak. It is also sufficient for the expiator to feed the same one poor person for sixty days.[2]

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1) The Mudd is equal to a half closed hand full; neither completely closed, nor completely open, and it is the mudd of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

2) See Irshad Al-Sari, v. 3, p. 378.

HOW TO SETTLE FOR THE DAYS OF FASTING

It is desirable that those who have some settlements for the days they did not fast during the month of Ramadan, to settle for them in days where fasting is not prohibited.

For those who delay their settlements for the next Ramadan, they have to fast Ramadan, then fast to settle what is left of days.

It is permissible to fast the left days intermittently or continuously.

According to Ibn Omar, may God bless them, the Prophet, (peace be upon him) said concerning this point **[If he wants, he can fast intermittently, and if he wants, he can fast continuously]**[1].

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1) Related by Al-Darkatni

CASES AND JUDGMENTS

The fasting person may face some problems while fasting. Therefore, in order that his fasting remains correct without being spoiled for any reason, we present in this chapter some cases with their related judgments.

One of the most important things that should be mentioned is that the Muslim should be beyond any doubt. Omar Ibn Al-Khattab said: Any one who is an object of suspicion cannot blame but himself. These are the cases:

1) Violating the sanctity of Ramadan means: that the faster broke the fast during the day willingly, and consciously.

2) The one who breaks the fast because he forgot or unwillingly is not considered to have violated the sanctity of the month of Ramadan.

3) If the faster violates the sanctity of the month of Ramadan repeatedly in one day, the expiation cannot be repeated.

4) The fast of a person who intends to break his

fast is not considered, because intention is a basic element of fasting and he rejected it.

5) The faster is allowed, to rinse his mouth, and to snuff up his nostrils with water during the day in order to cool off and wash up. In the noble Sunnah it is said that the messenger of God (peace be upon him), used to pour water on his head while fasting because of thirst or because of the heat.[1]

One should not exaggerate in rinsing or snuffing up his nostrils with water. It was related according to Lukeit Ibn Sairah that the Prophet, (peace be upon him), said: **[If you snuff up water overdo this exercise unless you are fasting]**[2].

6) The use of kohl, eyedrops, or ointment on the eyes for medical purposes during the fasting day does not break the fast, and nothing in it breaks the fast.

It was related about Inss, may God bless him, his saying: **[A man said to the Prophet, (peace be upon him), my eyes hurt me, can I smear them with kohl? He said: Yes]**[3]; be-

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1) Narrated by Ahmed and Malek, may God bless them.
2) Related by the people of the Sunnah.
3) Narrated by Al-Tarmazi.

cause the eye is not a natural orifice, and there has been no sound evidence that forbids the use of what was mentioned.

7) Applying medication on the wound does not break the fast, and nothing in it breaks the fast.

8) Cutting the nails during a fasting day does not break the fast.

9) To start the fasting day by being impure does not break the fast. However, the faster should clean himself for prayer, and should start his day while pure.

10) The one who gets dust of flour, lime or cement in his throat does not have his fast broken, specially for the people who work with such materials.

11) Scarification and phlebotomy do not break the fast, however they are disliked if the faster is afraid of getting weak.

12) Secretion during the day does not break the fast, and nothing in it does. However, the one who secrets during the day should wash up in order to perform his prayer.

THE COMPLETE FASTING

It is well known that fasting develops a fear of, and a belief in God. God, glory to His name, says in the Surah (The Cow): **"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil);"**[1] Fasting is also an exercise of patience. It strengthens the soul, and hence the will. Therefore, the faster should always have the character of a true believer so that his fasting would be complete; and the fast that is done to gain the favor of God is not a fast completely devoted to God.

The most important characteristics that the Muslim fasting person should have are as follows:

1) To refrain from following the desires. Jaber Ibn Abdullah, may God bless him said: **[If you fast, have your hearing, sight, and tongue fast from lie, sin, and... so on to say! do not make your fasting day similar to the days you do not fast]**.

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1) Verse: 183.

It was also said:

If I did not turn a deaf ear,
overlook things, and hold my tongue,
Then my share of fasting would have been mere thurst and hunger
and nay, I did not fast, have I said that I fasted a day.

2) The fasting person should take advantage of the occasion of the coming of the month of Ramadan to renew his repentance and submission to God, also he should enjoy reading and listening to the Glorious Koran, and he should perceive its Glorious Verses.

3) To refrain from lying, talking behind one's back, or gossip and saying different sorts of non sense; this is according to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying: **[He who does not retreat from speaking falsehoods and doing malfactions; Allah has no need of his abandoning his food and drink]**[1].

4) The fasting person should control his outrage, and he should not be aroused for the least little things, claiming that he is fasting. Moreover, he should not be rude nor coarse: specially with his family, and his neighbours.

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1) Related by Ibn Khuzayma and Ibn Habban.

It was related about the Prophet (peace be upon him), that he said: **[Fasting is not to fast from eating and drinking. Fasting is but to fast from foolish talk and obscene manners. If somebody insults you or mistreat you, say: I am fasting, I am fasting]**[1].

5) The fasting person should increase his charities, donnations, and good deeds as much as he can, he should also recommend benefactions and forbid malfactions. These are the attributes of the true believers at any time, beside the period of the glorious month of Ramadan. The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) was the best of all people in reciting the Koran, and he was most proficient during the month of Ramadan. According to Ibn Abbas, may God bless them; he said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the best of benefactors. Moreover, he was most proficient in reciting the Koran in Ramadan when Gabriel used to meet him (peace be upon him): He used to meet him every night during the month of Ramadan till the dawn, it was said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) presented the Koran to Gabriel, and in another story, it was said that Gabriel recited

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1) Related by Al-Bukhari.

the Koran on the Prophet who listened, then the Prophet recited and Gabriel listened, peace on them; when Gabriel (peace on him) was with him, he (peace be upon him) was faster than the wind in performing good deeds.[1]

7) To facilitate fasting by taking the (Sahur), that is eating before dawn break. The more the sahur is delayed, the better it would be, Inss, may God bless him, referred the following saying to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: **[Eat the meal before dawn break, for it is a blessing]**[2].

According to Omar Ibn Al-Ass, may God bless him, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **[What differentiate our fasting from the fasting of the people of the scriptures is the meal of the (Sahur)]**[3].

8) It is also desirable for the faster to hasten in breaking his fast at sunset, for his saying (peace be upon him): **[People would be still in a good condition as long as they hasten to break the fast]**[4].

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1) Related by Al-Bukhari.
2) Related by Al-Bukhari.
3) Related by Muslim.
4) Related by Al-Bukhari.

It is also desirable to break the fast at sunset by eating a date. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: When somebody among you wants to break the fast, let him eat a date, because it is a blessing. If he does not find dates, let him break the fast by drinking water, because it is pure.[1]

This is a glorious prophetical guidance, because the intestines absorb the water sweetened with sugar in less than five minutes, so the body quenches its thirst, and the symptoms of any lack of sugar disappear.

It is preferrable for the fasting person, before he breaks his fast, to say: **[In the Name of Allah, O God! I fasted for you, and upon your blessing I broke my fast].** As the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do.[2]

After eating dates, ripe dates, or something sweet, and drinking water, the fasting person has to perform the prayer of sunset, and then he has to continue breaking his fast; by doing this, he would understand the merit of hastening fast breaking, and behind performing the prayer at the beginning of its period.

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1) Related by the people of the Sunnah.

2) Related by Abu Dawoud

THE DESIRABLE FASTING

One can fast whenever he desires, except the days that are forbidden by Islamic legislation. The preference given to certain days for the performance of fasting is due to their holiness; and these days are:

1) **Fasting the holy month (Muharram):** This is one of the holy months about which Almighty God, glory to His name, said in the Surah (The Repentance): **"Lo! the number of months with Allah is twelve months by Allah's ordinance in the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred: That is the right religion. So wrong not yourselves in them..."**[1] i.e. of sanctity and glorification. Before Islam, the Arabs used to refrain from fighting in these months, when Islam came, it sanctioned this interdiction.

   The four sacred or holy months are: Thu Al-Ki'idah, Thu Al-Hijjah, Al-Muharram and Rajab.

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1) Verse: 36.

The month of Muharram is the second best month for fasting after the month of Ramadan, for it includes a selected day that day is the day of Ashuraa. According to the saying of Abi Hurayrah, may God bless him, about the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: **[The best time to fast after the month of Ramadan is the holy divine month of Al-Muharram; and the best prayer after the obligated prayers, is the night prayer]**[1].

Imam Ali, may God bless him, said: A man came and asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), which month do you order me to fast after the month of Ramadan? He said: If you are fasting after Ramadan, fast Al-Muharram, it is the month of God[2]. In this month, there is a day in which God forgave a folk and He (can) forgive another folk.[3]

2) **Fasting the day of Ashuraa:** This is the tenth day of Muharram, and it is a selected day in which Allah had forgiven many a folk, and in which He (can) forgive many others.

Muaweiyat Ibn Abu Sufyan said: I heard the

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1) Related by Muslim.
2) The atribution of the month to the name of God, glory to His name, is for glorification.
3) Related by Muslim.

Prophet (peace be upon him) saying: Fasting the day of Ashuraa, is not prescribed for you, but I am fasting. Those among you who wish can fast it, and those among you who do not, can break the fast.[1]

Ibn Abbas, may God bless them said: I did not see the Prophet (peace be upon him) seeking to fast a day in preference to another but for this day: the day of Ashuraa, and this month: the month of Ramadan.[2]

3) **Fasting on Mondays and Thursdays.**

4) Fasting three days in every month: Abu Thur Al-Ghafari may God bless him said: (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) ordered us to fast three days of the month: the white days; the thirteenth, fourteenth, and the fifteenth, and he said about this: It is like fasting all your lifetime).[3].

Furthermore, the person who is fasting voluntarily can break the fast, however, it is more likely to have him fast that day.

For the voluntary fasting; the woman should ask

1) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
2) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.
3) Related by Al-Nisai'.

the permission of her husband, if he is present. Abu Hurayrah said according to the Prophet (peace be upon him): **[Not a single day should a woman fast while her husband is present, unless she gets his permission; except during the month of Ramadan]**[1].

1) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

THE DAYS IN WHICH FASTING IS FORBIDDEN

1) Fasting on the day of doubt: this was previously explained.

2) Fasting the first two days of the two feasts: Al-Fitr and Al-Adha.

   Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, may God bless him, said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade fasting these two days. However, breaking the fast on Al-Fitr day (the first day after Ramadan) is a part of your fasting[1], and on the Day of Immolation, eat of your sacrifice.[2]

3) Fasting the days of (Tashriq): these are the three days following the day of Immolation during the pilgrimage festival – (tenth of Al-Hijjah). They follow the day of the Al-Adha Feast. They were called the days of Al-Tashriq, because during these days, pilgrims used to put the meat of sacrificed lambs

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1) i.e. the fasting of the month of Ramadan.
2) Narrated by Imam Ahmed.

and sheep in the sun to dry. Abu Hurayrah, may God bless him, told about the messenger of God (peace be upon him), that he sent Abdullah Ibn Hathafa to roam about the city of Mina and declare to the public: Do not fast during these days, for these days are for eating, drinking, and recalling Allah; Glory to His name.[1]

4) To fast on Fridays only: Abdullah Ibn Amru related that the Prophet of God (peace be upon him) **visited Juwaiyriya Bint Al-Hareth and found her fasting on Friday. He asked her: Did you fast yesterday?, she said: No. He said: Are you planning to fast tomorrow? She replied: No. So he told her: Then break your fast.**[2]

If the Muslims fast a day before Friday, or a day after, or if it is the Ashuraa day, then there is no objection. Jaber, may God bless him, related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **[Never fast on Friday unless you fast one day preceeding it, and one day following it]**[3].

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1) Narrated by Imam Ahmed.
2) Related by Al-Nisai'.
3) Related by Al-Bukhari.

5) To limit fasting to Saturdays; according to his (peace be upon him) saying: **[Do not fast on Saturdays except when it is obligated unto you]**[1].

6) Fasting throughout the whole year including the two days of the two feasts (Al-Fitr and Al-Adha). According to the speech of the messenger of Allah (peace be upon him): **[He who fasts for ever, is not considered to have fasted]**[2]. Also the messenger of God (peace be upon him) had forbidden continuous fasting with neither fast breaking, nor eating before the break of dawn; where he said: **[Ward off continuity of fasting – He spoke it three times – They said: But you do continue non stop fasting, O Messenger of Allah!.. He ànswered: You are not the same as I am: For when I retreat at night, my Lord feeds me**[3] **and gives me drink; so bear what you can of this matter]**[4].

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1) Related by Ahmed and by the people of the Sunnah.
2) Related by Al-Bukhari and muslim.
3) i.e. God endows him with the power of one who ate and drinked.
4) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

FASTING IN THE SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET (PEACE BE UPON HIM)

1) According to Abi Abdul Rahman Abdullah Ibn Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, may God bless them, he said: I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying:

[Islam is based on five principles: the creed that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammed is the messenger of God, the performance of prayers, the alms-giving, the pilgrimage to the House, and the fasting of Ramadan.] (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

2) According to the words of Sahel Ibn Saad, may God bless him, about the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: **[In Heaven, there is a door known by Al-Rayyan whereby the fasters enter on the Day of Resurrection, it is said: Where are the fasters? Nobody else can enter through it except them, and when they are in, it is closed, so that nobody can enter through this door]**, (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

3) According to Abi Hurayrah, may God bless

him, the messenger of God (peace be upon him) said: **[God does not want a person who does not refrain from saying and doing falsehood, to fast]**, (Related by Al-Bukhari and others).

4) According to Abdullah Ibn Massoud, his saying: We were with the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: **[O young people, those among you who can provide accommodations at a place, let them marry. It is the best way to lower the eyes and to keep women chaste, otherwise fast, because it is an imploration]** (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

5) According to Sahel Ibn Saad, may God bless him, the messenger of God said: **[People would still be in a good condition as long as they hasten to break the fast]**, (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

6) According to Inss Ibn Malek, may God bless him, his saying: The messenger of God (peace be upon him) said: **[Eat the meal (Sahur), for it is a blessing]** (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

7) According to Abi Ayoub, may God bless him, the messenger of God (peace be upon him) said: **[That who fasts Ramadan, and then fasts six days of the month of Shawwal, is like a person**

who fasts his lifetime through] (Related by Muslim).

8) According to Abi Thaalabah Al-Khishni, may God bless him, the messenger of God (peace be upon him) said: God prescribed for you ordinances that you should fulfill, He had put on you limits that you are not to go beyond, He prohibited things that you are not to profane, and He kept silent on things, things that He did not forget to mention, but did not name because He is Merciful, so you are not to look for these things. (Related by Imam Tabari).

THINGS RECORDED BY HISTORY

When the reader goes over the pages of the graceful Islamic history, he finds many attitudes, heroic deeds, and events that took place during the Glorious month of Ramadan, and had an influence on the souls of people, making them reckon their Almighty, Glorified Maker, and strengthening the Islamic belief in their souls; some of these matters are:

1) The Glorious Koran was revealed to the seal of the prophets and messengers, Muhammed Ibn Abdullah (peace be upon him), during the month of Ramadan in the cave of Hiraa in Mekka Al-Mukarrama.

2) Despite their small number, and their simple armament, the Muslims won the battle against the forces of paganism, despotism, and aggression. This was the battle of the great raid of Badr that took place during the month of Ramadan following the Hegira, and witnessed the rising of the Islamic banner high in the sky.

3) In the second year of the Hegira, in the month of Ramadan; the Al-Fitr almsgiving was obligated on all Muslims to purify their souls and enhance fraternity among them.

4) Almighty God blessed the Muslims and His messenger (peace be upon him) by conquering the graceful Mekka to rescue the Kaabah from the filthiness of paganism and idolatory. This took place in the month of Ramadan of the eighth year of the Hegira.

5) The books of the Sirah (Biography of the Prophet 'peace be upon him') relate that a delegation from Taef went to Meddina in the month of Ramadan of the ninth year of the Hegira to declare their Islam, hence, the Muslims felt more powerful and victorious.

6) That who reads historical books, would find out that Muslims conquered Rhodes Island in the month of Ramadan on the fifty second year of the Hegira.

7) The Muslim leader Tarek Ibn Ziad defeated king (Rodrick) in a fierce battle in the month of Ramadan of the ninety second year of the Hegira.

8) The eminent leader Salah Eddine Al-Ayyubi was victorious in his battles over the Crusades

in the month of Ramadan on the six hundred and fifty eighth year of the Hegira.

9) The Muslims stopped the advance of the army of the Tatars on the Islamic world in Ramadan, in the year six hundred fifty eight.

THE PRAYER OF AL-TARAWIH

The Prayer of Al-Tarawih is likeable for both men and women; it is performed after the night prayer, and before the prayer of Al-Witr; it extends till the end of the night. Abu Hurayrah may God bless him, related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to encourage people to stay awake during Ramadan – but without insisting upon this point; he used to say: **[Those who stay awake during the nights of Ramadan, out of belief and consideration, will have all their past sins forgiven]**[1]

Aishah – God bless her said: **[The Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed in the mosque, and many followed his lead; then he prayed in the receptacle, and those who followed increased in number. Then in the third night they gathered, but he did not come out; and when morning broke, he told them: I saw what you have done, and nothing stopped me from coming out, save my fear that it**

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1) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

may be imposed upon you][1]. This happened during Ramadan.

Muslims continued performing the prayers of Tarawih, individually and in groups till the period of the Caliphate Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, may God bless him, who had gone to the mosque on a night during the month of Ramadan, and said: If we unite the people to pray behind one Imam (prayer leader) it would be better; thus he gathered the Companions of the Prophet and consulted them; and they agreed with him and they were unanimous in their approval.

This happened in the fourteenth year of the Hegira. Abiy Ibn Kaab was selected as the Imam, because he was the best of the reciters. He memorized the Koran in the age of the messenger of of God (peace be upon him). Omar, may God bless him, used to perform Al-Tarawih prayer with them at the end of the night, and not at its the beginning. One night he went out, and found them praying Al-Tarawih and this pleased him. He said: blessed be this novelty. From that day on, the Tarawih prayer became a group Sunnah that the Companions of the Prophet agreed upon and Muslims adopted later on. The Tarawih prayer: is

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1) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

thirteen prostrations including the shaf'a and the witr prayers.

The Muslim has the liberty to increase the number of prostrations as much as he desires, for it is an act of devotion, and it is his business to increase its number depending on his ability.

During the reign of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, may God bless him, the Companions of the Prophet used to perform the prayer in twenty three prostrations including the witr. Imam Malek, may God bless him, related: Yezide Ibn Romane said: People used to perform in the age of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab twenty three prostrations in Ramadn excluding the witr. It is requested from the one who is selected to recite the Koran, to do that calmly and submissively, and to extend the recital if this would not annoy those who are praying behind him, and to finish the reading of the Koran in Tarawih prayer at the end of the month of Ramadan.

ADHERENCE

This is the entire devotion to something confining the self to it, whether it is good or evil. God Almighty says in the Surah (The Prophets): **"What are these images unto which ye pay devotion?"**[1].

In the legislation, it means that the Muslim should confine himself to the mosque with the intention of staying in it, to be close to Almighty God.

Adherence is one of the legislated matters. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to adhere for ten days during the month of Ramadan, but during the year in which He died, He adhered for twenty days,[2] and His Companions, may God bless thèm, adhered too.

Adherence is classified in two kinds:

1) Adherence as a Sunnah tradition; this is what

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1) Verse: 52.

2) Related by Al-Bukhari.

the Muslim choses to perform voluntarily, seeking the approachment of God.

2) Adherence as a duty:

This is what the Muslim obligates himself to perform; and it can either be through absolute vow; as to say: for Allah, I have to adhere to this. Or through the conditioned vow; as to say: If God heals this sick person who is related to me, I would adhere to this.

It was related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **[that who pledged to obey God has to obey Him]**[1]. It was also related that Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, may God bless him, said: Ye, messenger of God, I pledged to adhere for one night in the Holy Mosque, he said: Redeem your pledge[2].

The pillars of adherence are:

1) Setting the intention.
2) The mosque: the adherence of a person who pledged to adhere for some days whereby Friday is one of them, should be in the mosque where the Friday prayers will be performed.

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1) Related by Al-Bukhari.
2) Related by Al-Bukhari.

That who pledges to adhere for one day, or wants to adhere without making a pledge, should start his adherence before dawn and end it after sunset, and the one who pledges to adhere for one night or wants to do so voluntarily, should begin his adherence before sunset and finish it after dawn.

The following matters make the adherence invalid:

1) Leaving the mosque for no reason, even for a little while.

2) Menstruation and childbed.

3) Sexual intercourse.

For those who adhere and then invalidate the cause of their adherence, they will not be forgiven; thus, if it was a voluntary adherence, it is desirable that they settle for it and do it another time; but for those who have vowed to adhere, then it is an obligation upon them to settle for it and adhere another time. The adherent is allowed to eat and drink in the mosque and to sleep in it too. He is also allowed to leave it only to relieve nature, or to bid his folks farewell. He is also allowed to have his hair cut, his nails done, his body washed, be perfumed, and to

wear nice clothes. The adherent should occupy himself in praying reading the Glorious Koran, listening to it, asking for forgiveness and laudation.

THE NIGHT OF POWER (AL-KADR)

Al-Kadr; power, as in His saying, grand be His name, in the Surah (The Cattle): **"And they measure not the power of Allah its true measure"**[1].

The meaning is that this night is of great importance because it witnessed the revelation of the Glorious Koran.

Or Al-Kadr, which means fate which is usually associated with divine decree as in the saying: by fate and divine decree; accordingly the meaning would be to explain the divine decree, and to have it represented in this blessed night.. whatever the explanations are, the night of Power is a blessed night in which the Glorious Koran was revealed. Almighty God, glory to His name, says in the Surah (Smoke): **"Ha mim – By the Scripture that maketh plain – Lo! We revealed it on a blessed night – Lo! We are ever warning – Whereupon every wise command is made clear – as a command from Our presence – Lo! We are ever sending – A mercy from**

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1) Verse: 91.

thy Lord. Lo! He is the Hearer, the Knower"[1].

It is the most preferred night of the year; whereas Almighty God, glory to His name, says in the Surah (The Night of Power) **"Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Power – Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Night of Power is! – the Night of Power is better than a thousand months"**[2].

The Night of Power takes place in the blessed month of Ramadan: Read the words of God Almighty in the Surah (The Cow): **"The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Koran, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong)"**[3].

Precisely, the Night of Power falls in the last ten days of the blessed month of Ramadan.

In reference to Ayshah, may God bless her, she said: **The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to converse**[4] **in the last ten nights of Ramadan. He used to say: Try to investigate for the night of Power in the last ten nights of Ramadan**[5]. And it is

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1) Verses: 1 to 5.
2) The beginning of the Surah (The Night of Power).
3) Verse: 185.
4) That is: to adhere in the mosque hoping to see the night of power.
5) Related by Al-Bukhari.

likeable to stay awake, throughout this night, performing prayers and reciting the Glorious Koran.

Abu Huryrah, may God bless him, related about the Prophet (peace be upon him): **[Those who stay awake throughout the Night of Power, believing and considering; will have all their past guilts forgiven]** [1]**.**

The wisdom in staying awake throughout this night is that the Muslim will recall the Blessing of God upon him in revealing the Glorious Koran that came out to be a guidance towards what bears the well being of the world of humans and their happiness in the Hereafter. A part of the well known vow is: O God! my Lord! You are Forgiving, You like to Forgive, so please Forgive me.

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1) Related by Al-Bukhari.

AL-FITR ALMSGIVING

Brother reader, you probably still recall that of the benefits of fasting is the enhancing of one's feelings of affection. Therefore, Al-Fitr almsgiving was prescribed at the end of Ramadan. Al-Fitr almsgiving is an obligation prescribed by the messenger of God (peace be upon him) in the second year after the Hegira. Referring to the words of Ibn Abbas, may God bless them, he said: **[The messenger of God (peace be upon him), prescribed the Al-Fitr almsgiving to purify the faster, from obscenity and foolish talk on one side and to feed the poor on the other side. That who performs it before the prayer, it will be accepted from him, but for that who performs it after the prayer (of the Al-Fitr feast); it will be considered like any other charity]**[1].

By referring to Kuthayr Ibn Abdullah, in reference to his father; in reference to his grand father – may God bless them, they told that the messenger of God (peace be upon him) was asked

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1) Related by the people of the Sunnah.

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about Almighty God's saying in the Surah (The Most High): **"He is successful who groweth – And remembereth the name of his Lord, so Prayeth"**[1]. He answered: It was revealed about the Almsgiving of Al-Fitr Feast).[2].

Furthermore; alms-giving is an obligation on every able Muslim, on his wife and on every person he supports, such as the father or the mother, a male or a female, old or young; and even if he were a suckling infant.

When the sons reach the stage of maturity and they are not studying, and able to gain their means of subsistence; then their share of Al-Fitr almsgiving is no more given by their fathers, but instead, it will be an obligation upon them.

As for the girls' their share in Al-Fitr almsgiving is an obligation upon their fathers; unless they are married, in that case almsgiving would be an obligation upon their husbands.

If a married woman wishes to give the Al-Fitr alms, she is allowed to give it to her poor husband; because it is not her duty to support him.

But the husband is not permitted to give his

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1) Verses: 14 and 15.
2) Related by the people of the Sunnah.

Al-Fitr alms to his wife because he supports her and finally, the alms of Al-Fitr could be given to a relative whose support is not a responsibility upon the almsgiver.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ALMSGIVING

The spending of alms "i.e. their distribution" can be spent in eight different ways, they are stated in Almighty God's saying in the Surah (Repentance): **"The alms are only for the poor and needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and (for) the wayfarers; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise"**[1]

1-2) **The poor and the needy:** Those are the people who are in need and cannot get what suffices them of food, drink, lodging, vehicle, and career, and other such things that are necessary for the maintenance of human life.

3) **Those who collect them:** These are the collectors of alms, and they should be Muslims.

4) **Those whose hearts are to be reconciled:** Those are the people whose hearts are expected to

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1) Verse: 60.

reckon and embrace Islam, and similarly those who are to be inrooted in Islam.

5) **The captives:** These include the slaves, who are to be aided by the alms money in order to liberate themselves.

6) **The debtors:** These are the ones who are heavily indebted to the extent that they can not settle their debts.

7) **For the cause of Allah:** This means fighting for the cause of Allah (Al-Jihad), to raise His word; or to defend the inviolable. This provision includes the various legislative benefits; among which is the expenditure for the sake of propagating the Islamic Call.

8) **The wayfarers:** These are the travellers who are cut from their countries and do not possess the means to reach their destination due to shortage of money; in case their journey is not a disobedience or a sin.

It is not an obligation to distribute the alms to the eight classifications equally, but it is rather better to give the priority to the most deserving of them.

It is also permissible to give the Al-Fitr alms to many needy persons, as well as the alms of a group to one needy person only.

It is preferrable that the Al-Fitr alms be given to those who deserve them after the morning prayer of the feast day, and before the feast prayer, and it is permissible to give them before that day so that the receiver would be able to benefit from them.

According to Ali, may God bless him, Al-Abbas asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) if he can pay the alms before time, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed him to do so.

According to Al-Bukhari, may God bless him: People used to give the alms one or two days before the feast.

The Al-Fitr almsgiving does not become excusable except in case of poverty.

That who dies before the sunset of the last day of the month of Ramadan, does not receive alms, as for the one who is born before the sunset of the night before breaking the fast, his almsgiving is obligated upon his father, and its amount is: one cubic measure, that is four mudds (measures) of the muds of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The mudd is equal to a half closed hand full; neither completely closed, nor completely open, and it was the hand of the Prophet (peace be upon him) of the main aliment of the natives of the country in which the almsgiver is living.

It is also allowed that the value of the cubic

measure be paid in cash, and this is more advantageous to the beneficiary. This value is set according to the various conditions prevailing in each country.

It is desirable for the traveller to pay the Al-Fitr alms in the country in which he lives, if he had requested his kinsfolk to give it for him, or if they have the habit of giving the alms for him.

But if he had not requested his kinsfolk, nor did they have the habit to give him the alms; then he would be obliged to give the alms by himself; from the main aliment of the people of the country in which he lives.

This type of charity is called, the Al-Fitr almsgiving, because it is prescribed in the fast breaking,that is: it is paid with the setting of the sun in the last day of the month of Ramadan.

It was also said that it was called as such, because it is related to the Fitrah: that is the innate peculiarity of character, where it was prescribed for persons.

THE FEAST PRAYER

Among the social phenomena of nations is that they should have a feast; that is; one or more days wherein they show their joy and happiness.

Inss Ibn Malek, may God bless him – said **[The Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Medinah, at a time wherein they had two days in which they played around. He said: What are those two days? They answered: They are two days in which we used to play around in the pre-Islamic age. The messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) then said: Allah has substituted for you two better days: The Day of Al-Adha and the Day of Al-Fitr]**[1].

The feast was called (Eid) due to its meaning in Arabic; that is: it recurrs (ya'uud) every year.

The purpose of the fast breaking (Al-Fitr) feast is to show the Muslim's joy in completing the obligation of fasting; that Almighty Allah, glory to His name, had prescribed for them, and whereby

1) Related by Al-Tarmazi.

they obeyed His command, and benefited and were blessed by His gratification.

While the purpose of the Al-Adha feast is to show their joy in (Al-Hajj) the pilgrimage that reminds them of sacrifice, redemption, and equality among people.

The prayers of the two feasts, Al-Fitr and Al-Adha, are a confirmed Sunnah for all those who are obliged to perform the Friday prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had prayed them – and performed them perseverantly. They are performed with neither a call to prayer (Adhan) nor a second call to prayer (Ikamah). Referring to Jaabir Ibn Abd Allah ; may God bless him; he said: I performed the two feasts' prayers with the messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) more than once and more than twice, and all the time they were performed neither with a call to prayer, nor with a second call to prayer.[1]

The periods of these prayers start from the time the superogatory performance prayer is free to be done; on the feast day; that is when the sun reaches three meters high, before its sunset. It is preferrable that the prayer of the Al-Adha feast be performed beforehand; so that the Muslims would

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1) Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

be able to slaughter their sacrifices, while the prayer of the Al-Fitr feast be delayed a little so that people would be able to give their Al-Fitr alms beforehand.

The feast prayer is performed in two prostrations; Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, may God bless him – said: The Al-Adha prayers are two prostrations and the Al-Fitr prayers are two prostrations.[1]

In these two prostrations, the prayer; leader (Imam) recites the Surah (The Opening) aloud and then a short Surah or a verse (Ayah) during each prostration.

In the first prostration, after the Al-Ihram laudation, and before reciting the Surah (The Opening), he says the laudation (Allah Akbar) six times. And in the second prostration after the (Al-Kiyam) laudation and before the recitation, he says the laudation five times. The laudations should be consecutive and continuous, and its pronounciation is: (Allah Akbar). After the Imam terminates his prayer in front of the people, he goes up the Minbar to perform the feast sermon (Khitbat Al-Eid), which should include; device, guidance,

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1) Related by Al-Nissai.

illustrating the wisdom of the feast, inducing people to be forgiving, fraternal, and loving.

The nature of the feast sermon is like that of the Friday sermon,it is composed of two sermons. There is no objection if the Imam starts the sermon by a laudation to God or a thank to Him as in the Friday sermon.

Furthermore, it is preferrable that the feast prayer be performed in open places and public squares, except if this was inconvenient due to rain falls or so; then it would be performed in mosques. In the feast, it is preferable that the praying person goes to the place of praying through one street, and returns home through another.

Furthermore, it is likeable for the person who wants to perform the feast prayer to go walking, and to eat before he goes out for the Al-Fitr feast prayer.

Referring to Abi Hurayrah, may God bless him, his saying: **[The Prophet (peace be upon him) on the feast day used to return from the mosque travelling back along a different road from the one he went from]**[1].

According to Ali, may God bless him: It is a Sunnah of the feast to go walking, and to eat

1) Related by Al-Bukhari.

before going out.[1]

It is also desirable in both feasts; that the praying person be: clean, perfumed, and wearing his best clothes. In reference to Inss, may God bless him, he said: **[The messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) commanded us in the two feasts, to wear the best of what we have, and to be perfumed with the best perfumes, and to sacrifice the best of what we have]**[2]. It is a desired matter that the Muslim congratulates his Muslim brother by saying unto him: May Allah receives (the prayers) from us and you.

On the day of the feast; the Muslim should remember his relatives and visit them. and should honor his parents, and make them joyful and happy together with the folk of his house.

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1) Related by Al-Tarmazi.
2) Related by Al-Hakem.

A FINAL WORD

Here I stop writing without finishing my work hoping to be back with you soon, to deal with another subject, by God's will.

I ask God, grand be His name, that this booklet will be of use to the readers, to bless it, and to have its meanings and aims recorded in the minds of those interested.

Furthermore, I hope that the readers will consider it seriously and sincerely.

That who finds that it lacks too many information, and goes over things, I quickly offer him my apology. My only concern is to clarify matters for the beginners, and to guide those who are seeking guidance, so that they may find a way approach God, grand be His name.

God Almighty is the Guider into the path.

Kamal Ali Al-Muntasser
Islamic Call Society



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